

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-7, and 16-32 were pending in the application. Claims 16 and 19 have been amended. Claim 33 has been added. Claim 18 has been cancelled. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 5-7, 16-17, 19-33 remain pending in the application.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-3, 5-7, and 23-32 were allowed.

Claims 18-19 and 22 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Applicant appreciates Examiner's consideration of these claims.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 16-17 and 20-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowers et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,233,073) in view of Sabourin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,903,545).

Claim 16 has been amended to incorporate the features of claim 18. Applicant submits that the amended independent claim recites a combination of features deemed allowable by the Examiner. In accordance, amended independent claim 16 is believed to patentably distinguish over the cited references, whether alone or combined.

Claims 17 and 19-22 depend on claim 16 and are therefore believed to patentably distinguish over the cited reference, whether alone or combined, for at least the same reasons given above.

Applicant respectfully requests the examination of new independent claim 33.

Claim 33 includes the limitations of claim 16 and claims 21-22. Applicant submits that the new independent claim 33 recites a combination of features deemed allowable by the Examiner. In accordance, claim 33 is believed to be patentably distinguishable over the cited reference, whether alone or combined.

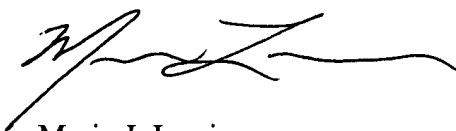
CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance, and an early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If a phone interview would speed allowance of any pending claims, such is requested at the Examiner's convenience.

If any extensions of time (under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136) are necessary to prevent the above referenced application(s) from becoming abandoned, Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extensions. If any fees are due, the Commissioner is authorized to charge said fees to Meyertons, Hood, Kivlin, Kowert, & Goetzel, P.C. Deposit Account No. 501505/5681-96600/BNK.

Respectfully submitted,



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